



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Engineer Research and
Development Center

News Release

Release No. H06-00

Contact: **PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

For Release: Immediately

Phone: **(603) 646-4292**

Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory • 72 Lyme Road • Hanover, NH 03755-1290 • <http://www.erdc.usace.army.mil>

CORPS SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION RESEARCH

The U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) in Hanover, N.H., recently signed an agreement with Bitterroot Restoration of Corvallis, Mont., for ecological restoration research.

This Cooperative Research and Development Agreement, which was brokered by the Montana State University TechLink Center in Bozeman, enables Bitterroot Restoration and CRREL to jointly develop and commercialize new technologies for restoring disturbed or contaminated sites. Bitterroot Restoration is the oldest complete services environmental restoration company in the western United States. Its primary restoration approach is based on the strategic use of native plant species for restoration of disturbed sites. It is a pioneer in development of ecologically integrated restoration techniques for large, complex sites, such as mining sites and abandoned mine lands.

One of eight laboratories which make up the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center, CRREL's mission includes developing cost-effective restoration techniques for cold-region sites, including contaminated military bases. Environmental restoration within cold regions presents challenges different from those in more temperate regions. Costs of treatment often are much higher because of remote locations, and in some cases conventional techniques fail because of the short summer season. Through the recently initiated collaboration, Bitterroot Restoration and CRREL will be able to leverage each other's experience and expertise in environmental restoration. Areas of collaboration include research and development focusing on use of plants and rhizosphere microorganisms for remediation of contaminated soils, environmental engineering and land stabilization techniques, and ecological database management.

TechLink is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to link companies in Montana and the surrounding region with DoD centers for joint research and technology

transfer. Its overriding purpose is to contribute to the success of both technology-based companies and traditional resource-based industries in the state and region.

For more information, please contact Sharon Borland at (603) 646-4735 or email Sborland@crrel.usace.army.mil .

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